

Nonlegislative Debate in the House: One-Minute, Morning-Hour, and Special-Order Speeches

December 2, 2020

Congressional Research Service

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

R46626



R46626

December 2, 2020

Jane A. Hudiburg

Analyst on Congress and
the Legislative Process

Nonlegislative Debate in the House: One-Minute, Morning-Hour, and Special-Order Speeches

Three types of speeches have evolved in the House of Representatives to allow Members to address a variety of topics when legislation is not pending before the body: one-minute, morning-hour, and special-order speeches. These periods of nonlegislative debate are not provided for in House rules but are arranged under the terms of unanimous consent requests agreed to by the House.

Members delivering remarks are expected to adhere to House rules, the chamber's precedents, and the Speaker's announced policies. House Rules I and XVII are especially pertinent to nonlegislative debate, as they provide the Speaker with the powers to preserve order in the chamber and to recognize Members to speak.

During periods of nonlegislative debate, Members may speak on matters related to their districts or on broader national and international issues and events. These speeches have included announcing the introduction of a bill, recognizing individuals or institutions, promoting or opposing a policy action, or outlining the day's legislative schedule. Recognition for nonlegislative debate alters between the parties, and each party is allotted the same portion of time to deliver remarks.

One-minute speeches, which generally occur at the start of a legislative day, are allowed at the discretion of the Speaker and do not need to be reserved in advance. On days in which these speeches are permitted, Members may claim seats in the front row of their parties' sides of the chamber and are then recognized, in turn, to address the House for one minute.

Morning-hour and special-order speeches are reserved through the Members' respective party leaders. Members deliver five-minute morning-hour speeches on days in which the House convenes early for the purposes of conducting nonlegislative debate. Special-order speeches range in duration from 5 minutes to 60 minutes and are usually given during a 4-hour period following the conclusion of legislative business.

This report provides the rules, precedents, and policies governing nonlegislative debate in the House and discusses the evolution and current practice of one-minute, morning-hour, and special-order speeches. The report will be updated to reflect any changes in House procedure affecting nonlegislative debate.

Contents

Introduction	1
Uses of Nonlegislative Speeches	1
House Rules Related to Nonlegislative Debate	2
Rules I and XVII: Recognition and Decorum	2
Rule V: Broadcasting Nonlegislative Debate	3
One-Minute Speeches	4
Governing Authorities	4
Recognition	4
Duration	5
Morning-Hour Debate	5
Governing Authorities	6
Days and Meeting Times	6
Recognition	7
Duration	7
Special-Order Speeches	7
Governing Authorities	7
Recognition	8
Duration	8
Inserting Remarks into the Record	8

Tables

Table 1. Nonlegislative Debate in the House	10
---	----

Contacts

Author Information	11
--------------------------	----

Introduction

House rules and precedents limit Members' opportunities to address the House on topics of their choosing. Among these restrictions, the most pertinent is House Rule XVII. This rule provides the Speaker with the discretionary power to recognize Members and requires Members, once recognized, to confine their remarks to the measure, amendment, or motion that is currently before the House. The same rule also enables the Speaker or Members to "call to order" any Member who "transgresses the Rules of the House," such as those governing decorum or words spoken in debate. Thus, a Member, even after recognition, is restricted in speech and behavior when speaking on the floor.

Notwithstanding Rule XVII, Members often address the House on a wide variety of subjects when no legislation is currently before the body. Such nonlegislative debate is not provided for in House rules but is arranged under the terms of unanimous consent requests agreed to by the House.

Three forms of nonlegislative debate have evolved in the House to enable Members to speak on issues when no business is pending: one-minute, morning-hour, and special-order speeches. During one-minute speeches, any Member may come to the well and address the House for one minute provided that he or she is recognized to do so. Morning-hour speeches, up to five minutes in duration, and special-order speeches, ranging from five minutes to 60 minutes, are reserved through the majority and minority party leadership.

Members engaging in such nonlegislative debate are to adhere to House rules, chamber precedents, and the Speaker's announced policies, which govern aspects of the speeches including recognition, timing and duration, decorum, and chamber logistics. The Speaker announces policies on the opening day of Congress and may make additional announcements within a Congress. Unanimous consent agreements established at the start of a new Congress or session, as well as subsequent consent requests agreed to by the House, further define the forms of nonlegislative debate.

This report addresses the rules, precedents, and policies governing nonlegislative debate in the House and discusses the evolution and current practice of one-minute, morning-hour, and special-order speeches. The report will be updated to reflect any changes in House procedure affecting nonlegislative debate.

Uses of Nonlegislative Speeches

When legislation is pending before the House, Members are expected to confine their remarks to subjects being addressed in the bill. In contrast, nonlegislative debate periods allow for greater flexibility of subjects under discussion. For instance, Members may deliver remarks of concern to their districts, such as in speeches that commend an individual or an institution. They may also address broader national and international issues and events regardless of whether legislation has been introduced on these topics.

During periods of nonlegislative debate, Members may announce the introduction of a bill, solicit cosponsors, or introduce guest chaplains from their districts. Remarks may also address the day's legislative schedule. These scheduling statements, often delivered as a colloquy between the majority and minority leaders, may support or oppose soon-to-be pending legislation or outline the expected schedule for the daily session.

One-minute, morning-hour, and special-order speeches are available to all Members but can be particularly beneficial to junior Members or those of the minority party, who might otherwise have few opportunities to speak before the House. Members may post their remarks on their websites or highlight them in other constituent communications.¹

House Rules Related to Nonlegislative Debate

The three forms of nonlegislative debate are not provided for in House rules. Rather, one-minute, morning-hour, and special-order speeches have developed as a unanimous consent practice in compliance with House rules, precedents, and the Speaker's announced policies, which are announced on the opening day of Congress and may be altered or refined within a Congress. Policies related to nonlegislative debate are often the same, or similar, as the policies announced in previous Congresses.

Members engaging in nonlegislative debate must abide by the standing House rules. The House rules most pertinent to nonlegislative debate are Rules I and XVII and also Rule V. Rules I and XVII address debate and decorum in the chamber. Clause 2 of Rule XVII provides the Speaker's discretionary power of recognition.² Pursuant to clause 2(a) of Rule V, the Speaker maintains control over the broadcasting of House floor proceedings.

Rules I and XVII: Recognition and Decorum

Rule I, clause 2, affords the Speaker with the power to preserve order in the chamber. Clause 5 of the same rule enables the Speaker to rule, subject to an appeal of the House, on questions of order raised by the Speaker or another Member.³

Rule XVII defines the Speaker's power of recognition and provides additional parameters on decorum and debate. Clause 1(a) requires Members to seek and receive recognition from the Speaker or the chair of the Committee of the Whole before making an address, offering a motion, or making a point of order. Accordingly, the Speaker or the chair, pursuant to clause 2, determines who will be recognized and for what purpose.⁴ The same clause provides a 60-minute cap for special-order speeches and restricts Members from speaking for more than one hour on any question.

Clause 1(b) of Rule XVII requires Members to speak on the pending business (the legislative measure or motion before the House) and prohibits them from maligning the character or intentions of a fellow Member or another official, such as the President.⁵ Rule XVII also

¹ Broadcast coverage made available under Rule V may not be used for campaign or commercial purposes. See clause 2(c) of Rule V for limitations on the use of audio and visual broadcasting and recording of House floor proceedings. U.S. Congress, House, *Constitution, Jefferson's Manual and the Rules of the House* (hereinafter *House Manual*), 115th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington: GPO, 2019), §684.

² Charles W. Johnson, John V. Sullivan, and Thomas J. Wickham Jr., *House Practice: A Guide to the Rules, Precedents, and Procedures of the House* (Washington: GPO, 2017), ch. 16, §50.

³ Pursuant to clause 5 of House Rule I, the Speaker's rulings on questions of order are subject to the appeal of a Member or Delegate or the Resident Commissioner. Following the appeal, the House may vote to sustain or overturn the ruling. *House Manual*, §627.

⁴ *House Practice*, ch. 46, §1.

⁵ The rule does not specify what would be considered unparliamentary, but statements made by the chair indicate that general admonishments are not a sufficient offense if they do not identify individual Members. See CRS Report R45866, *Words Taken Down: Calling Members to Order for Disorderly Language in the House*, by Gail E. Baitinger.

addresses comportment in the chamber and the use of exhibits. Members who engage in disorderly or unparliamentary conduct may be subject to a call to order by another Member, whereby the offending words are written down and read aloud by the Clerk (hence, the procedure is known as “words taken down”) or have their statements, on order of the House, stricken from the *Congressional Record*.⁶

Rule V: Broadcasting Nonlegislative Debate

Clause 2(a) of Rule V provides the Speaker with the authority to control audio and visual broadcasting of House floor proceedings. During morning-hour and special-order speeches, the Speaker’s announced policy, which was instituted in the 103rd Congress (1993-1994) and reestablished in every subsequent Congress, is to fix the camera on the rostrum or the Member delivering remarks (and not have the camera pan the chamber).⁷ At the bottom of the screen, viewers see a “crawl” message stating that the House is conducting morning-hour debate or that legislative business has concluded for the day and the House is in a period of special-order speeches.⁸

Clause 2(a) also requires complete broadcast coverage of House proceedings. However, it does not require that Members’ microphones remain on if they continue to speak when no longer under recognition, such as when their conduct is deemed by the chair to be disorderly.⁹

Floor Fight over Special-Order Broadcasting Policy

In 1984, minority party Members, led by the Conservative Opportunity Society, delivered several coordinated special-order speeches that were critical of House leadership. In response, Speaker Tip O’Neill instructed the camera operators to pan the near-empty chamber in order to show that few Members attended the late-night speeches.

Shortly after the new policy took effect, Speaker O’Neill and Representative Newt Gingrich, engaged in a heated exchange on the House floor, during which Speaker O’Neill spoke directly to Representative Gingrich, calling one of his special-order speeches “the lowest thing that I have ever seen.” Representative Trent Lott demanded that the Speaker’s words be taken down, and the Speaker pro tempore ruled in favor of the demand, stating, “The Chair feels that that type of characterization should not be used in debate.”

Despite continued criticism from the minority party, the Speaker’s policy to pan the chamber during special-order speeches remained in effect until February 11, 1994 (103rd Congress). On that day, Speaker Tom Foley announced that television cameras would not pan the chamber while Members gave special-order speeches. On January 4, 1995 (104th Congress), 11 years after his floor skirmish with Speaker O’Neill, the newly elected Speaker Gingrich reinstated Foley’s no-panning policy. Subsequently, the Speaker’s policy not to pan the chamber during nonlegislative debate has been reinstated at the start of each Congress.

Sources: “Televised Partisan Skirmishes Erupt in House,” *CQ Almanac 1984* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1985), pp. 206-209; *Congressional Record*, vol. 130 (May 15, 1984), pp. 12201-12202.

⁶ Clause 4, Rule XVII, *House Manual*, §961. See also CRS Report R45866, *Words Taken Down: Calling Members to Order for Disorderly Language in the House*, by Gail E. Baitinger.

⁷ *House Manual*, §684.

⁸ *Congressional Record* (January 3, 2019), p. H199.

⁹ *House Practice*, ch. 10, §5.

One-Minute Speeches

When permitted by the Speaker, one-minute speeches are generally given at the start of a legislative day after the chaplain's prayer, the approval of the House *Journal*, and the Pledge of Allegiance. These speeches may also be allowed, at the Speaker's discretion, after the conclusion of legislative business and before the beginning of the period for special-order speeches. During the one-minute speech period, Members seek unanimous consent to address the House for one minute on topics of their choosing. One-minute speeches do not need to be reserved in advance through party leadership.

Governing Authorities

One-minute speeches are permitted as a unanimous consent practice of the House. They must be in compliance with House rules, precedents, and the Speaker's announced policies that are established in each Congress.

The practice of limiting certain nonlegislative speeches to one minute began in 1937 (75th Congress). Majority Leader Sam Rayburn announced that he would hereafter object to "requests to address the House for more than 1 minute before the legislative business has been concluded."¹⁰ In 1945 (79th Congress), Rayburn, as Speaker, reiterated this policy, noting that since his statement in 1937, "Members have not asked to proceed for more than a minute before the legislative program."¹¹

One-minute speeches are currently governed by the Speaker's policy first announced in 1984 (98th Congress) and reestablished, as modified, in each subsequent Congress.¹² Precedents further prescribe the practice of one-minute speeches. These precedents may supersede or clarify the Speaker's announced policy.¹³

Recognition

Pursuant to clause 2 of House Rule XVII, the Speaker has the discretion to decide if Members will be recognized for one-minute speeches and how many speeches will be allowed during any legislative day. Depending on the legislative schedule, the Speaker may provide for a specific number of speeches, allow an unlimited number during a designated period of time, or not allow any speeches.¹⁴ Generally, the chair states at the start of a legislative day how many one-minute speeches will be allowed.¹⁵

The chair reserves "the right to limit 1-minute speeches to a certain time or to a special place in the program on any given day, with notice to the leadership."¹⁶ Since the 115th Congress (2017-2018), the Speaker's announced policy has included an additional provision formalizing an earlier

¹⁰ *Congressional Record*, vol. 81 (August 2, 1937), p. 8004.

¹¹ *Congressional Record*, vol. 91 (March 6, 1945), pp. 1788-1789.

¹² See Speaker's announced policy, *Congressional Record*, vol. 130 (August 8, 1984), p. 22963.

¹³ *House Manual*, §950.

¹⁴ *House Practice*, ch. 16, §50.

¹⁵ The majority leader's daily announcement also states when and how many one-minute speeches will be allowed during a specified legislative day. See <https://www.majorityleader.gov/floor-resources/the-daily-leader>.

¹⁶ *Congressional Record*, daily edition (January 3, 2019), p. H199.

tradition that states that the chair will not recognize “Members for a one-minute speech more than one time per legislative day.”¹⁷

The current practice for recognizing Members is based on the Speaker’s announced policy of 1984 (98th Congress) as modified and reestablished in the 116th Congress.¹⁸ The chair alters recognition between the majority and minority in the order in which Members seek recognition in the well, recognizing Members from the chair’s right to the chair’s left. (From the chair’s vantage point, Democratic Party members are seated on the right, and Republican Party members are seated on the left.)

Members intending to make one-minute speeches may claim seats in the front row of their parties’ sides of the chamber. In doing so, they are aware of the order in which they will likely speak. (Republican Members are generally recognized by their proximity to the center aisle, while Democratic Members are generally recognized by their proximity to the Speaker’s Lobby.)

Members do not have to reserve their positions in advance with party leadership. However, on some days, party leaders may organize their Members into what are sometimes called “theme teams” or “message groups” to deliver the party’s message to the American people. Since the 101st Congress (1989-1990), the chair has followed a “practice of recognizing Members suggested by their party leadership before others in the well.”¹⁹

When a Member’s turn to speak arrives, the Member approaches the Speaker’s rostrum to seek recognition for one minute. Once recognized, the Member speaks in the well from a lectern on the appropriate side of the chamber.

Duration

As the name implies, one-minute speeches are limited to 60 seconds in duration. The chair’s calculation of time consumed is “not subject to challenge.”²⁰ By precedent, the chair endeavors “to allocate time in a nonpartisan manner” and will not “entertain a request to extend recognition beyond one minute.”

Traditionally, the chair does not monitor the time consumed by the Speaker, the majority leader, and the minority leader in order to afford House leaders “the courtesy of extended and unfettered debate.”²¹ Once recognized to address the House for one minute, these individuals may speak for longer durations of time.

Morning-Hour Debate

During morning-hour debate, Members address the House for up to five minutes on topics of their choosing. On legislative days in which these speeches are permitted, the House convenes two hours early for nonlegislative debate. Members reserve time for a morning-hour speech through

¹⁷ *House Manual*, §950.

¹⁸ *Congressional Record*, daily edition (January 3, 2019), p. H199.

¹⁹ *House Manual*, §950.

²⁰ *House Manual*, §950.

²¹ *House Practice*, ch. 16, §45. On February 7, 2018, then-Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi delivered a one-minute speech that lasted eight hours and six minutes, a record for the longest House floor speech since at least 1909, according to the House Historian. See Sheryl Gay Stolberg, “Pelosi Held House Floor in Advocacy of ‘Dreamers’ for More Than 8 Hours,” *New York Times*, February 7, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/07/us/politics/pelosi-dreamers-budget-deal.html>.

their party leadership. After morning-hour speeches conclude, the House recesses for at least 10 minutes prior to resuming its session and proceeding with legislative business.

Governing Authorities

Morning-hour debate is enabled by a unanimous consent request agreed to at the start of a new Congress or session rather than the Speaker's announced policies. As with the other forms of nonlegislative debate, Members must adhere to House rules governing speech and decorum.

The morning-hour debate period was established in the 103rd Congress in response to new limitations placed on special-order speeches. (In 1994, special-order speeches were restricted to a four-hour period, and no Members could be recognized for such speeches after midnight.) The first unanimous consent agreement set a 90-day trial period. At the end of this period, the House agreed to another unanimous consent request that extended the practice for the duration of the Congress. In each Congress since, unanimous consent agreements have been used to authorize morning-hour speeches.

Days and Meeting Times

The meeting times for morning-hour debate are established in unanimous consent requests agreed to by the House at the start of a new Congress or session. The current practice follows an agreement requested by the House majority leader on the opening day of the 116th Congress.²² This agreement states that, on Mondays through Thursdays, when the House is session, the House shall convene two hours earlier than the daily hour of meeting in order to conduct morning-hour debate. If the House adopts an order (by motion, resolution, or unanimous consent) to meet at a time that differs from the daily hour of meeting, the House will meet to conduct morning-hour debate at the time designated by the order.²³

The daily hour of meeting is determined by a House resolution agreed to at the start of a Congress or session.²⁴ During the first session of the 116th Congress, H.Res. 10 fixed the daily hour of meeting as "2 p.m. on Mondays; noon on Tuesdays (or 2 p.m. if no legislative business was conducted on the preceding Monday); noon on Wednesdays and Thursdays; and 9 a.m. on all other days of the week." Thus, during that session, morning-hour debates commenced at noon or 10:00 a.m. on Mondays through Thursdays, unless the House established, by order, a different time for morning-hour debate. Regardless of when morning-hour debate is provided for, however, the Speaker is authorized to dispense with the debate period "if emergency reconvening authorities are exercised."²⁵

Pursuant to clause 1 of Rule XIV, the House's daily order of business, unless otherwise ordered, shall begin with the chaplain's opening prayer followed by the approval of the *Journal* and the

²² Unanimous consent agreement, *Congressional Record*, daily edition (January 3, 2019), p. H198.

²³ For example, a Member might state, "I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet on Monday next, when it shall convene at noon for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business." *Congressional Record*, daily edition (March 5, 2020), H1519. For information about House adjournments and setting the time to reconvene, see CRS Report R42977, *Sessions, Adjournments, and Recesses of Congress*, by Richard S. Beth and Valerie Heitschusen.

²⁴ At the start of each session of the 116th Congress, the House agreed to a resolution determining the daily hour of meeting: H.Res. 10, fixing the daily hour of meeting of the first session of the 116th Congress, and H.Res. 778, providing for the hour of meeting of the House. The two resolutions contained identical text.

²⁵ *House Practice*, ch. 16, §50.

Pledge of Allegiance.²⁶ However, on days designated for morning-hour debate, a previous order (the unanimous consent agreement that governs morning-hour debate) establishes the following schedule: morning-hour debate, recess, and resumption of the House session at the time fixed by resolution or a previous order. Morning-hour debate may not extend beyond 10 minutes before the time set for the daily hour of meeting. The prayer, approval of the *Journal*, and the Pledge of Allegiance are postponed until the House resumes its session after the recess.

Recognition

The time set aside for morning-hour debate is allocated equally between the parties. The Speaker alternates recognition of Members by party for the initial and subsequent speeches. Such recognition is based on lists submitted to the chair by the majority and minority leaders. Members wishing to speak must reserve time through their respective leadership. During the morning-hour period, the Speaker recognizes Members for nonlegislative debate only, and such recognition may be withdrawn.²⁷

Duration

The duration of morning-hour speeches is to be no longer than five minutes. The chair will not entertain unanimous consent requests to extend individual speeches beyond five minutes or to extend the debate period past the 10-minute termination time. The five-minute limit, however, is not placed on the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip.²⁸

Special-Order Speeches

Special-order speeches are evenly divided between the parties and generally occur following the conclusion of legislative business. This period can be as long as four hours but may not extend beyond 10 p.m. Members reserve time to speak through their party leadership and are limited to one such speech per week. Members may speak for up to one hour, and they may be assigned shorter allocations of time at the discretion of party leadership. Each party may establish additional guidelines to Members regarding requests to speak during the special-order period.

Governing Authorities

Like one-minute speeches, special-order speeches have developed as a unanimous consent tradition of the House. Members delivering these speeches are restricted by clause 2 of Rule XVII, which prohibits any Member for speaking for more than one hour in debate, even by unanimous consent.

The current practice for recognizing and delivering special-order speeches is derived from earlier Speakers' policies that have been modified in subsequent Congresses. The announced policy of the 98th Congress (1983-1984) provided the practice of alternating recognition between the majority and minority parties.²⁹ The policy of the 103rd Congress (1993-1994) established the four-hour special-order period following the conclusion of legislative business, the pre-

²⁶ *House Manual*, §869.

²⁷ *House Practice*, ch. 16, §50.

²⁸ *House Practice*, ch. 16, §50; *Congressional Record*, daily edition (January 3, 2019), p. H198.

²⁹ *Congressional Record*, vol. 130 (August 8, 1984), p. 22963.

reservation practice, and a restriction on recognition after midnight, which was changed to 10:00 p.m. in 2011 (112th Congress). In the 116th Congress (2019-2020), the Speaker reestablished the policy of not recognizing a Member for more than one special-order speech per week, “nor may a Member sign up for a second special-order speech in the same week.”³⁰

Recognition

In normal practice, special-order speeches occur after the conclusion of legislative business. The period for speeches is no longer than four hours evenly divided between the parties. Speeches may extend past the four-hour limit with the permission of the chair, which is granted only “with advance consultation between the leaderships and notification to the House.” Recognition, however, will not be granted after 10:00 p.m.

Each party may reserve its first hour for party leaders or their designees. The hour may be subdivided and reallocated by the leadership concerned. Recognition during this first hour alternates between the parties. For instance, if a Member of the Democratic Caucus is first recognized for the first hour of the special-order period on one day, a Member of the Republican Conference will be the first recognized for the first hour on the next legislative day that special-order speeches occur.³¹

The parties’ second hour of time is divided into two 30-minute periods. First recognition for these shorter periods also alternates between the parties from day to day.

Recognition for individual Members and the time they are allotted is determined by a list that party leadership submits to the chair. The chair alternates recognition between the parties and “the Speaker may withdraw recognition should circumstances warrant.”³²

Duration

Special-order speeches may not last for more than one hour during the party’s first allocated hour and no more than 30 minutes during the party’s second hour. The one-hour or 30-minute allocations may not be extended via a unanimous consent request. Any time that is not claimed during the 60-minute period or each of the 30-minute periods is “considered to be expired.” If legislative business concludes after 6:00 p.m., the time for special-order speeches is prorated to end by 10:00 p.m., allowing both parties the same allotment of the remaining time.³³

A Member recognized to speak may yield to colleagues but may not specify a block of time that the colleague may speak. After yielding, the Member may regain the floor by stating, “reclaiming my time.” Due to the practice of yielding to colleagues, one special-order speech may include statements made by more than one Member. Accordingly, leadership may coordinate with multiple Members to provide a 60-minute speech consisting of several statements on the same topic.

Inserting Remarks into the Record

In addition to delivering speeches on the House floor, Members may ask unanimous consent to insert remarks as written statements into the *Congressional Record*. Alternatively, Members may,

³⁰ *Congressional Record*, daily edition (January 3, 2019), p. H199.

³¹ *House Practice*, ch. 16, §50.

³² These circumstances include disorderly conduct. *House Practice*, ch. 16, §50.

³³ Speaker’s announced policy, *Congressional Record*, daily edition (January 3, 2019), p. H199.

in their initial request to deliver a nonlegislative speech, ask permission to extend and revise their remarks. Agreement to such a request allows the Member to make technical, grammatical, and typographical corrections. Permission to extend remarks also allows the Member to insert any undelivered portion of a speech into the *Congressional Record*. The Member may also insert extraneous matter, such as articles and letters from constituents. The undelivered portion of the speech and extraneous matter is printed in a distinctive typeface.

If a Member seeks to insert remarks into the *Record* adjacent to another Member's delivered speech, the Member inserting remarks may coordinate with the other Member in advance of the delivered speech. To accommodate this, the Member delivering the speech requests unanimous consent that all Members have five legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of the speech. (Some Members routinely make these requests without pre-coordinating with Members seeking to insert statements.) Agreement to this request allows other Members to insert their written remarks into the *Record* below this point. The statement is printed in distinctive typeface below the delivered speech.³⁴

³⁴ To insert remarks into the *Congressional Record*, Members and staff can submit written statements to the Office of the Clerk on days in which the House is in session. For information on inserting General Leave statements, which appear in the House section of the *Congressional Record*, or extensions of remarks, which are placed in a separate section of the *Record*, Members and staff may access "Congressional Record Inserts" at <https://housenet.house.gov/legislative/research-and-references/transcripts-and-records/congressional-record-inserts>.

Table 1. Nonlegislative Debate in the House
As Commonly Practiced via Unanimous Consent of the House

Form	Governing Authorities ^a	Reserved Through Party Leadership?	Timing ^b	Duration	Parliamentary Phrases
One-minute speeches	Speaker's announced policy and by unanimous consent	no	At start of the legislative day and after the approval of the <i>Journal</i> ; occasionally after the conclusion of legislative business and before the start of special-order speeches or at other times during the daily session	No more than one minute; by custom, exceptions made for the Speaker, majority leader, and minority leader	Member: Madam [or Mr.] Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House for one minute [and to revise and extend my remarks]. Speaker: Without objection, the gentleman [or gentlewoman] is recognized for one minute.
Morning-hour debate	Unanimous consent	yes	Mondays-Thursdays, two hours prior to the daily convening time or at another time agreed to by the House; not to extend beyond 10 minutes prior to the designated convening time	No more than five minutes; by custom, exceptions made for the Speaker, majority leader, and minority leader	Speaker: Pursuant to the order of the House of ____, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate. The Chair recognizes the gentleman [or gentlewoman] from ____ for 5 minutes. Member: Madam [or Mr.] Speaker, I rise today to...
Special-order speeches	Speaker's announced policy	yes	After the conclusion of legislative business and before 10 p.m.; four-hour period split evenly between parties; first two hours controlled by respective party leaders; second two hours are split into 30-minute periods	One hour or 30 minutes or increments thereof during a four-hour period that may be prorated in order to conclude at 10 p.m.	Speaker: Under the Speaker's announced policy of ____, the gentleman [or gentlewoman] from ____ is recognized for ____ minutes. Member: Madam [or Mr.] Speaker, I rise today to...

Sources: *House Practice*; *Congressional Record*.

Notes:

- a. One-minute, special-order, and morning-hour speeches have developed as a unanimous consent practice in compliance with House rules, precedents, and the Speaker's announced policies. The governing authorities identified in the table provide the format and requirements specific to the form of nonlegislative debate.
- b. Nonlegislative debate may be allowed on days in which the House is in session and at the discretion of the Speaker.

Author Information

Jane A. Hudiburg
Analyst on Congress and the Legislative Process

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.